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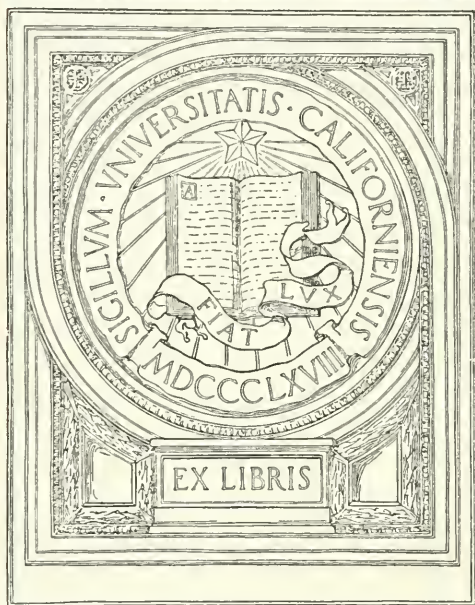
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OF THE

COMMITTEE ON CROWN AND GOVERNMENT LANDS.

Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page.
INTERIM REPORT ON TRANSFER OF MANAGEMENT OF FORESTS AND WOODLANDS FROM COMMISSIONERS OF WOODS TO FORESTRY COMMISSION	4
FINAL REPORT	6
APPENDICES :—	
1. List of Witnesses examined	20
Memoranda on land and properties held, system of management in force, and staff employed :—	
2. War Office	20
3. Air Ministry	21
4. Disposal and Liquidation Commission	22
5. Lands Directorate	23
6. Admiralty	24
7. Office of Works... ..	25
8. Office of Woods and Forests (Crown Lands)	27
9. Forestry Commission	31
10. Post Office	32
11. Ministry of Transport... ..	33
12. Inland Revenue Valuation Office	33
13. Board of Trade... ..	35
14. Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries	36
15. Scottish Board of Agriculture	37

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1922

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT.

Treasury Minute dated 7th October, 1921.

The First Lord and the Chancellor of the Exchequer state to the Board that His Majesty's Government has decided to appoint a Committee to examine the question of concentrating in one Department all Government purchases and sales of Land and Buildings and the management of the Estates of the Crown and Government property.

The Committee will be constituted as follows :—

Sir HOWARD FRANK, Bt., K.C.B. (Chairman),

The Right Hon. Sir FREDERICK PONSONBY, G.C.V.O.,
K.C.B.,

The Hon. E. G. STRUTT, C.H.,

Sir JOHN STIRLING-MAXWELL, Bt.,

Sir N. F. WARREN FISHER, K.C.B.,

Sir JOHN HUBERT OAKLEY.

Mr. G. ISMAY will act as Secretary to the Committee

My Lords approve.

The estimated cost of printing and publishing this Report is £21. No other additional expenditure has been incurred.

INTERIM REPORT.

To the LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF

HIS MAJESTY'S TREASURY.

MY LORDS.

1. Under the terms of our reference we were appointed to examine the question of concentrating in one Department all Government purchases and sales of Land and Buildings and the management of the Estates of the Crown and Government property.

2. We have heard evidence submitted on behalf of the Commissioners of Woods and of the Forestry Commission suggesting the transfer of the management of the Forests and Woodlands under the control of the Commissioners of Woods to the Forestry Commission.

3. The proposals placed before us are briefly—

(a) The transfer should apply to substantially the whole of the Crown Forests and Woodlands, thus removing the necessity for the maintenance of a Forestry Department within the Office of Woods.

(b) The financial responsibilities attaching to the management of transferred properties should rest with the Forestry Commission and not with the Office of Woods.

(c) The transfer should be based on the general principle that the management of an entire Estate and not merely the forests and woodlands on an Estate, should pass to the Forestry Commission, but provision should be made to enable a retransfer of land to be made to the Commissioners of Woods when development for purposes other than afforestation is desirable.

(d) The administrative powers of the Forestry Commissioners in relation to transferred properties should be framed upon the basis of the statutory provisions as to the powers of the Commissioners of Woods, particularly where the interests of the public or commoners are concerned.

(e) Any financial provisions which may be necessitated by the transfer or retransfer of properties should, after agreement by the Departments concerned, be subject to the approval of the Treasury.

4. We have been asked by the Departments concerned to consider these proposals in advance of our general recommendations. So far as this can be done, and we beg, therefore, to submit to Your Lordships the following Interim Report thereon.

5. We are of opinion that the transference from the Commissioners of Woods to the Forestry Commission of the management of the Forests and Woodlands at present under the control of the Commissioners of Woods is desirable in principle, and we recommend that the legislation necessary to effect the transfer should be initiated, subject to provision being made to meet the following points.

6. On general grounds we do not consider it desirable that the Forestry Commission should undertake the management of portions of estates not required for or in connection with afforestation, except, perhaps, where the particular circumstances may make it desirable and economical for that Commission to act as agents on behalf of another department. There are certain areas of agricultural land, and lands with building and accommodation value included in the estates under consideration, which, in our opinion, would be more advantageously dealt with separately. We consider that the precise areas to be transferred should be settled at a later date, and Your Committee will be happy to advise upon any particular cases of difficulty.

7. While at a later stage of our enquiry we shall deal with the possibility of centralising the administration of mining rights, we think that, in view of the close connection which must be maintained between the mining and forestry interests in the areas under consideration, the Forestry Commission should at any rate for the present take over all responsibility in these particular cases. It would be well, however, to reserve power to enable a retransfer of these rights to be made to any central managing body, if such a course should later seem desirable.

8. We consider that power should be reserved to retransfer lands from the Forestry Commission to any other department where such a course may prove desirable in order to permit development for building or industrial purposes.

9. We wish to add that at the present stage of our enquiry we are not prepared to say that it is desirable to retain for the purposes of afforestation the whole of the Forests and Woodlands proposed to be transferred to the Forestry Commission. Nor do we wish it to be taken that in making the above recommendations, we exclude from further consideration the possibility of transferring the work of the Forestry Commission to a Central Administration should we find it practicable to recommend to Your Lordships the concentration contemplated in our terms of reference.

10. If Your Lordships decide to give effect to the above recommendations Your Committee propose at a later date to pass under review the organisation to be set up by the Forestry Commission for the management of these Forests and Woodlands. Your

Committee have so far considered only the principle of the transfer and have not given consideration to the question of the efficiency of the present management.

We have the honour to be,

My Lords,

Your obedient servants,

HOWARD FRANK (Chairman).

F. E. G. PONSONBY.

EDWARD G. STRUTT.

JOHN STIRLING-MAXWELL.

N. F. WARREN FISHER.

JOHN H. OAKLEY.

G. ISMAY

(Secretary).

11th January, 1922.

FINAL REPORT.

To the LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF
HIS MAJESTY'S TREASURY.

My Lords,

1. Under the terms of our reference we were appointed to examine the question of concentrating in one Department all Government purchases and sales of Land and Buildings and the management of the Estates of the Crown and Government property.

We have been informed that of existing Public Departments the Board of Inland Revenue—in virtue of its controlling a Valuation Branch with local offices throughout Great Britain—is regarded as the proper Department for undertaking all valuation work for the Government (other than that connected with the winding-up of certain war transactions), but that it is not considered desirable to place on that Department the responsibility for purchase, sale or management of lands, etc.

2. At the present time *purchases and sales* of land and buildings are effected as occasion requires by several individual Government Departments, but the great bulk of the work falls to the following Departments, viz. :—

(a) The Lands Directorate, acting on behalf of the War Department (of which it is a branch), the Air Ministry, and the Disposal and Liquidation Commission.

- (b) The Admiralty, for Naval purposes.
- (c) The Office of Works, acting on behalf of the majority of Civil Departments.
- (d) The Post Office, for certain postal, telegraph and telephone purposes.
- (e) The Board of Trade, for the bulk of the foreshores belonging to the Crown.

For professional advice and assistance in cases of purchase and sale Government Departments have of recent years generally employed either the Inland Revenue Valuation Office or the Lands Directorate.

3. As regards *management*, the whole of the ancient landed possessions of the Crown, surrendered to the public for the term of life of the Sovereign, are administered by the Commissioners of Woods, Forests and Land Revenues. Other Government lands are administered by the Departments mentioned above, and in addition by several Departments concerned with carrying out special work resulting from Government policy or other considerations, such as Farm Settlements, administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Board of Agriculture, Scotland; Forests, administered by the Forestry Commissioners; and canals and waterways, with adjacent property, managed by the Ministry of Transport.

4. It is impossible to provide figures showing with accuracy the total cost in the several Departments concerned of the staffs employed upon the management of lands and buildings and purchase and sale transactions. In many cases the work is undertaken by officers who are also responsible for the performance of duties not strictly definable as management, and, moreover, the value of services rendered to Departments generally by the Inland Revenue Valuation Office and the Lands Directorate cannot be assessed with any accuracy. In view of the large amount of work still being done in connection with the winding-up of war emergency hirings, the figures of present cost would in any case be of little guidance so far as the cost of administration of permanent holdings of property is concerned.

5. The following particulars of the approximate areas of land, either freehold or on long lease, occupied by the fighting departments for defensive, accommodation and training purposes, will serve to illustrate the size of the problem involved in centralisation. In all cases lands held abroad are excluded.

(a) War Department.

219,500 acres held permanently; 28,500 acres taken for war emergency purposes and not yet relinquished.

(b) Air Ministry.

20,000 acres for permanent stations, and about 14,000 acres temporarily occupied and now in course of relinquishment.

(c) Admiralty.

17,470 acres freehold held permanently, and about 1,700 acres on lease or other tenures.

Amongst Civil Departments the chief holder of property is the Office of Works, which, being responsible for the accommodation of the staffs of all Civil Departments and for the provision of sites and buildings for many special purposes, holds 1,233 properties, freehold or on building lease, and 4,040 hired premises. This Department also administers several housing estates, comprising in all about 10,000 houses, erected either in connection with the Woolwich Arsenal housing scheme or by the Ministry of Munitions and other Departments, to provide accommodation for employees at factories, etc., occupied during the War.

The Post Office, which is responsible for the provision of buildings for postal purposes in the smaller towns, holds on lease 3,200 Class II Post Offices. The Class I Post Offices, though vested in the Postmaster-General, are acquired, fitted up and maintained by the Office of Works.

Various Departments are large holders of land and buildings acquired in connection with the carrying into effect of different branches of Government policy. The Forestry Commission, for instance, holds about 133,000 acres of land (excluding Ireland), of which 43,000 is freehold and the remainder on lease or feu; the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries holds 21,000 acres in connection with Land Settlement schemes, and the Board of Agriculture for Scotland similarly holds 384,000 acres.

The Crown Lands administered by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests total in area 370,000 acres, exclusive of foreshores and copyholds, and areas in which the Crown owns the minerals but not the surface of the land.

The Disposal and Liquidation Commission holds at present properties involving an area of approximately 24,000 acres. These properties are, however, available for sale either immediately or when no longer required for storage purposes.

While the above list does not pretend to be by any means exhaustive it shows that at least 1,200,000 acres of land in Great Britain and Ireland are administered by Government Departments.

6. We summarise very briefly in the appendices to our report the system in force in various Departments as regards purchases and sales and management of land and buildings.

It will be seen that, under present conditions, professional staffs large and small are maintained by several departments not only at headquarters but throughout the country. The Lands Directorate of the War Department has a staff of Land Agents attached to each of the seven Army Commands in Great Britain; the Valuation Office of the Inland Revenue maintains one hundred and eleven district officers distributed throughout Great Britain, and staffed by professional valuers, and these are in turn controlled

through thirteen Divisional offices; the Office of Works local staff is organised in nine district offices in England and Wales; and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, whose staff is in process of reorganisation, will have local Commissioners in charge of the ten districts into which England is divided for Land Settlement purposes. In addition the Commissioners of Woods employ professional agents and local receivers, either part or whole time, in various parts of the country.

We should add that many of the officials in these local offices are not employed entirely or even mainly upon land management work. The staff of the Office of Works' district offices consists, for instance, of Architects, Engineers and other staff employed upon maintenance and accommodation work for local branches of Government Departments, but performing also, as incidental to this work, duties in regard to the acquisition and valuation of properties, and some local staff of this nature may remain necessary notwithstanding any concentration which may be effected of work in connection with the purchase, sale and management of land and buildings.

7. Before proceeding to our recommendations we think that a word is desirable with regard to the processes involved in a purchase or sale or other disposition of land. A decision having been reached that Department "A" requires for instance premises in a given locality, the employment of a professional surveyor or valuer is then necessary to ensure the acquisition of suitable premises at a reasonable cost, and upon him must fall the task of conducting the negotiations to a successful conclusion, subject, of course, either to confirmation by his principal, or preferably subject to a limit as to price and conditions previously included in the instructions received from his principal.

It follows from this that purchases and sales involve at every stage the advice and active intervention of a professional valuer if the work is to be satisfactorily performed, and a divorce between valuation and dealings in land is seen to be purely artificial.

8. We therefore regard it as axiomatic that a qualified professional staff should be available for advising Departments in regard to valuations, purchases and sales, etc., of real property, and for the actual conduct of negotiations, and we cannot adopt any suggestion that valuations should or can be separated from purchases and sales (*i.e.*, actual negotiations).

9. After a careful consideration of the whole of the evidence placed before us, we entertain no doubt that, with some small exceptions which we indicate later in our Report, the whole of the professional surveying and valuing staffs now distributed in pockets, large and small, throughout the Government Service should be completely amalgamated and departmental staffs of that character eliminated, and we incline to the view which is, we understand, shared by the Council of the Surveyors' Institution, that the organisation thus formed should be entrusted to the management of a Board placed under the direction of the

Treasury as the co-ordinating and controlling Department for the whole service.

In carrying out this amalgamation a certain amount of sifting and strengthening of staffs will be necessary.

This body, being in the nature of a Central Lands Department, would (as is the case at present for instance with the Government Actuary) be the professional advisers and agents for each and every Department, and Departments should be instructed to ask for its assistance whenever occasion arises. In conducting purchases and sales of property the central body would not be concerned with any questions of policy, in regard to which the decision must obviously be taken by the Department responsible to Parliament.

Its function would be to find in a locality specified by the instructing department a site or building suitable for the purposes indicated by that department, and after agreement had been reached as to the suitability of a property, to proceed with the negotiations for purchase, subject to a limit as to price laid down by the instructing department. All *professional* work and advice in connection with the purchase and sale of land and buildings by a Government Department should fall to this office without exception.

10. We regard it as cardinal that this rearrangement of professional staffs should result in a decrease in expenditure, and indeed we think it will eventuate in a considerable saving. It is clear that a certain immediate economy should result from the elimination of the several reserves of man power which must necessarily have been created under the present system of maintaining professional staffs in several different Departments. We feel confident also that the rearrangement will lead to more practical results in actual negotiations.

11. The special interests of the Revenue would require to be safeguarded if the suggested amalgamation of all professional staffs is adopted, and this, we think, might readily be achieved by the appointment *ex officio* to the Board of Management of the Central Lands Department of an Inland Revenue representative. We do not, however, feel it to be within our province to make recommendations as to the precise form of organisation to be adopted—which seems to us a matter for the Establishments Department of the Treasury—beyond recording our opinion that the management of the Department should be conducted by a Board consisting of a Treasury Chairman, representatives of the Inland Revenue and Office of Woods, and one representative of Government Departments generally.

12. The problem of concentrating the *management* of Crown and Government Lands presents greater difficulties. But, in our opinion, the new organisation which we have proposed should also be entrusted with this work, as estate management is admittedly a function of a qualified surveyor and valuer. We

do not imagine that the principle we favour can be seriously disputed, and, so far as estate management pure and simple is concerned, we should deprecate exceptions in practice to it, as exceptions once admitted tend to become the rule.

PROPERTIES HELD BY THE SERVICE DEPARTMENTS.

13. There is, however, one class of lands to which we think the principle of centralisation must be applied with some modifications. We refer to the management and control of lands and buildings held by the fighting departments.

We take the War Department, as the largest holder of land for defensive purposes, as an example. As will be seen from the summary of War Department holdings appended to our Report (Appendix 2), the total area of lands held permanently by the Department is 219,480 acres, consisting principally of sites of barracks and camps, fortifications, training areas and rifle ranges. It is obvious that many of these properties cannot be utilised in such a way as to produce revenue, and in these circumstances the control and management are to a great extent concerned with questions of maintenance, a matter chiefly for the Works Branch of the War Department.

The total area of War Department lands let to tenants is 134,382 acres, of which the greater portion consists of grazing rights. In such cases the War Department reserves, in addition to powers of summary resumption of possession, the right of military user. Under these conditions it is clear that the lands cannot be managed simply as a commercial proposition, but that the return which is obtainable is dependent in a large degree upon the extent to which military user is likely to be exercised. This is a question which can only be answered by the military side of the War Office, who must obviously have the deciding voice on all matters involving the use of land for military purposes. It is essential, therefore, that the land agents in the Commands, upon whom the War Department rely for technical assistance on all local questions of estate management, must work in the closest day to day touch with the military personnel.

14. The suggestion which we have to make to meet the particular circumstances of the fighting departments is that, while the land agents in the Commands should be absorbed in the Central Lands Department, that Department should second to the War Department such staff as may be necessary to carry out the local work of the Commands. The aim which we have in view in advocating that these officers should be absorbed in the central body is to ensure that all professional staffs should feel that they have the full strength of the Central Lands Department behind them in dealing with any of the difficult problems which confront them, and to provide, as far as is humanly possible, that the professional services of that office shall be utilised to the greatest advantage by each and every department.

An arrangement of this nature is not in effect any great departure from the existing system. At present purchases and sales of land and buildings, which are necessarily decided upon at headquarters, are effected by the Lands Directorate Head-quarter Staff, and under our proposals this work would fall to the Central Lands Department. The routine work in the Commands with regard to lettings is carried out by local officers, but all questions of difficulty or importance are referred to the Lands Directorate. The proposals we have made will tend to ensure the continuance of co-operation between the staff responsible for the principal land transactions of the War Department and the local staff in the Commands, while, on the other hand, an arrangement under which the local staff remained entirely under the War Department and the head-quarter staff was absorbed in the new body would, we think, give rise to a grave risk that the services of the Central Lands Department would not be utilised to the best advantage.

15. Similar considerations apply in a greater or less degree to the management of lands by the Air Ministry and Admiralty, but we think that treatment on the same lines will be found to meet the difficulties which might arise from a complete divorcement of professional staffs from these Departments.

H.M. OFFICE OF WORKS.

16. Under the proposals we have set out above for the amalgamation of all professional surveying and valuing staffs, the Hire and Purchase Branch of the Directorate of Lands in the Office of Works would be absorbed in the Central Lands Department. The Office of Works would continue to be responsible for the inspection and allocation of accommodation of Government departments, but, in any case in which it was decided that the acquisition of additional accommodation was necessary, the services of the professional staff of the Central Lands Department would be utilised in the search for a site or building and the subsequent valuation and negotiations for its acquisition.

It is essential that in such cases the closest possible *liaison* should be maintained between the officers of the Central Lands Department and the inspectors and architects of the Office of Works with a view to securing premises which would not require expensive structural repairs or alterations to render them suitable for the purposes in view. This would, however, only correspond to the present system under which the different branches of the Office of Works operate in close collaboration.

The principal Estate management undertaken by the Office of Works is in connection with the housing estates erected at Woolwich or taken over from the Ministry of Munitions and other departments. We see no reason why the whole of these estates should not be handed over to the management of the Central Lands Department until a convenient opportunity arises for disposal.

MANAGEMENT OF CROWN LANDS.

17. In accordance with the views we have expressed regarding the principles of land management, we consider that the whole of the organisation of the Office of Woods and Forests should be absorbed in the Central Lands Department. No new principle is involved in this transfer: the present Office of Woods is directly under the Treasury as regards the direction of policy within the provisions of the Crown Lands Acts, and the position of the Central Lands Department would be precisely similar.

The evidence before us shows conclusively that the present division of the management of Crown Lands between two Commissioners does not work satisfactorily, and tends to the work of the Department being concentrated in two watertight compartments, with a lack of co-operation on questions common to both divisions of the work. Amalgamation of the whole of the management of Crown Lands under one direction is desirable on every ground, and, in view of the varied nature of the properties held and their distribution throughout the whole of the country, it seems to us that there are obvious advantages to be gained by the absorption of the Office of Woods into the Central Lands Department, thus placing at the immediate disposal of the Commissioner the services of a qualified professional staff in a position to carry out, with economy, the management of local as well as central properties.

18. The present system of management of Crown properties in London has particularly engaged our attention. The only professional assistance employed by the Commissioners in this connection consists of the part-time services of an architect and surveyor in private practice, assisted by one whole-time technical officer on the staff of the Office of Woods. Recently, we understand, a very limited number of cases have been submitted to the Chief Valuer of the Inland Revenue Valuation Office for his advice. We cannot regard these arrangements as adequate in view of the immense value and importance of the properties in question, and we have heard evidence showing that there is dissatisfaction on the part of Crown tenants with the present management of these properties. So far as we are able to judge, the principles which the Commissioners of Woods have laid down for the assessment of rents, etc., are not open to objection, but we think that difficulties have arisen in the application of those principles, due, in our view, to the professional assistance received being on an insufficiently broad basis. We are strongly of opinion, therefore, that the transfer of the work to the officers of the Central Lands Department will lead to an improvement of relations as between landlord and tenant, and will ultimately benefit the Crown Revenues.

19. We do not, however, contemplate that absorption in the central body will in the case of the agricultural lands necessarily involve a departure from the present system of management by

outside professional agents and receivers. In our opinion that system has worked well and is economical, and we recommend that it should be continued.

The question of the extent to which the local offices of the new organisation can be utilised in the management of the scattered miscellaneous properties in charge of the Commissioners can only be decided when some experience of the working of the new arrangements has been acquired, but we point to the fact that the work of the North mining district of Wales is now conducted by the local officers of the Inland Revenue Valuation Office as an indication of what may be possible on these lines.

20. While, in view of the above recommendations regarding the transfer of the management of Crown Lands, we do not propose to review in any detail the present system of management, there are certain outstanding points we think it desirable to bring to your notice.

The Agricultural Estates of the Crown covering an area of 164,700 acres, are widely scattered over the whole of Great Britain and in several cases consist of isolated properties. We understand that the Commissioners of Woods have, with the assent of Your Lordships, recently initiated a policy of sale of outlying properties and that in a few cases sales have already been effected.

We desire to express our entire agreement with this policy, and we would further suggest that serious consideration should be given to the question of extending the scope of this decision so as to cover the sale of the whole of the agricultural estates belonging to the Crown, except where, for special reasons of national sentiment or expediency, the retention of a particular estate may be desirable. We do not, of course, contemplate by this that a wholesale disposal of these properties should be undertaken forthwith; rather we wish to indicate that, in our view, it would be to the general advantage of the Crown Revenues to effect a gradual disposal of agricultural lands as and when favourable opportunities for realisation occur. It is impossible to ignore the fact that the material return which is now obtained from these estates as a whole is not commensurate with that which could be secured by the re-investment in other ways of the capital value to be secured by a gradual sale of the properties. Nor is the State in a position to benefit by those amenities of possession which, to some extent, compensate the private landowner for the low return on his invested capital.

If our suggestion is adopted, we consider that the proceeds of sales could, with material gain, be utilised in the purchase of freehold town investments.

21. We consider also that a careful and systematic review of the character and net return (taking into account reversion value) now being obtained from certain of the properties in London, in relation to the estimated capital value of the properties, might with advantage be carried out. In many cases

we think it would be found that sales could be effected upon terms which would secure a substantial increase in income if the proceeds were re-invested upon the lines we have indicated above.

As a result of a more or less systematic concentration of the Crown's holdings in this way, we should anticipate not only an increase in the net annual return but also appreciable economies in the cost of the management and administration of the Crown estates.

FORESTRY COMMISSION.

22. In our interim report we indicated our agreement with a proposal to transfer to the Forestry Commission the management of the Forests and Woodlands at present under the control of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests.

We have now given consideration to the question of the possibility of transferring the work of the Forestry Commission to the Central Lands Department. The functions of the new department would, as we conceive it, consist in making valuations, negotiating purchases and sales and undertaking general estate management, and this work is obviously in a different category from the silvicultural operations conducted by the Forestry Commissioners. In the latter case the value of the estate is almost wholly concentrated in the timber. Having regard, therefore, to the special purposes for which the Commission was established and the entirely individual nature of its work, we have come to the conclusion that there would be no advantage in endeavouring to amalgamate it with the work of the Central Lands Department.

We have been informed that many of the estates now in the possession of the Forestry Commissioners have been acquired upon special terms from parties interested in the aims of the Commissioners. Should any such cases as these arise in the future it would not seem necessary for the Central Lands Department to intervene, except as regards supplying a valuation for the guidance of the Commissioners. Any lands available for disposal should, however, follow the normal procedure we have laid down.

BOARD OF TRADE—FORESHORES.

23. We have referred in Appendix 13 to our Report to the findings of the Royal Commission on Coast Erosion concerning the dual management of foreshores by the Board of Trade and the Commissioners of Woods and Forests.

From the information furnished to us we find it impossible to recommend that this work should be separated from the Board of Trade, bound up as it is with questions in regard to navigation and the disposal of wreck washed ashore for which that Board is

responsible. The whole management of foreshore is extremely complicated, and introduces many questions which are entirely outside the ordinary duties of a professional valuer or surveyor.

We recommend, therefore, that the management of foreshores should remain with the Board of Trade, and it will be a matter for consideration, if our proposals for a Central Lands Department are accepted, whether the foreshores now in the charge of the Commissioners of Woods should not rather be transferred to the management of the Board of Trade than to the Central Department.

24. We think it right, however, to call your attention to the principles upon which such foreshores are now managed by the Board of Trade. As we understand it, the Board has taken the view that they are bound to administer foreshores primarily in the interests of the public and not with the object of realising a revenue thereby. We do not, however, feel that this is a matter upon which we are called to make any recommendation.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE.

25. The professional staff of this department is engaged, not so much in connection with the management of Government lands, as upon the work entailed by the responsibility of the Minister of Agriculture for giving sanction to and generally watching the schemes administered by County Councils for the settlement of ex-service men, in connection with which the Government bears a large financial responsibility.

While, as will be seen from the summary of the duties carried out by these officers given in Appendix 14 to our Report, certain of the work performed in connection with Land Settlement is such as to necessitate the services of a qualified valuer and surveyor, we understand that the officers of the Lands Branch also act generally as the representatives of the Ministry for all purposes within their local areas, thus carrying out work which could not properly be assigned to a Central Lands Department such as we have recommended. Moreover, as regards the estates held directly by the Ministry for the settlement of ex-service men no question of land management on a purely commercial basis arises. Work in connection with the collection of rents from tenants and the superintendence of repairs is undertaken by the local Director of the estate.

26. In these circumstances, we have arrived at the conclusion that the work of the Lands Branch of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is not suitable for incorporation in the Central Lands Department, and we do not recommend any alteration in the present system so far as management is concerned. Valuations, purchases and sales of Government land, however, should be conducted by the Central Lands Department, as in all other cases.

SCOTTISH BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

27. The position of the Scottish Board of Agriculture is similar to that of the Ministry in England, except that instead of the schemes being carried out by County Councils under supervision, the Board is itself responsible for the acquisition of estates and the sub-division into small holdings.

28. We consider that it is impossible to divorce the management of these estates from the Board, but that valuations, purchases and sales should be carried out by the Central Lands Department.

GENERAL.

29. From the evidence before us it appears that certain Departments from time to time conduct an investigation, either by the appointment of a Committee or otherwise, into the properties in their possession with a view to disposing of any which, as a result of a change of circumstances or policy, it may have become unnecessary to retain. We are of opinion however that more comprehensive consideration might well be given to this question.

We suggest that it might be advantageous if the Treasury were at an early date to direct the Central Lands Department to consider this question exhaustively with the Departments concerned, with a view to realising any properties which are either no longer essential for Government purposes or which can be replaced by alternative propositions, equally suitable for the purposes served, on terms which would secure either a profit on realisation or economy in administration.

CONCLUSION.

30. While we have dealt in a certain amount of detail with the circumstances of the fighting departments and the larger civil departments employing valuation and surveying staffs, it is only for the sake of illustrating our idea of the working of the principle of absorption of staffs which we have recommended. Our conclusion is, in short, that all Surveying and Valuing staffs should, with the small exceptions we have indicated, be absorbed into one Central Organisation and should undertake all professional work in connection with valuations, purchases and sales of land and buildings and the management of the estates of the Crown and Government property. The opinion we have formed, after full consideration of all the evidence placed before us, is that such a concentration is not only desirable, but is essential if the State is to secure the best possible service in these transactions. This Committee clearly, however, cannot act as an appeal tribunal before which any given department which considers it may have a case for exceptional treatment should urge that case; that, in our opinion, is a matter for the Treasury. But we should not easily be convinced that the organisation we have

recommended would not, in the nature of things, be far better equipped for the management of Crown and Government property than individual Government departments, whose primary business and equipment are, generally speaking, for totally different purposes.

31. We summarise below the main recommendations made in our Report :—

- (1) All professional surveying and valuing staffs in the departments, with the exception of the Ministry of Agriculture and Scottish Board of Agriculture, should be completely amalgamated in a Central Lands Department under a Board of Management responsible to the Treasury.
- (2) The Board of Management should consist of a Treasury Chairman, representatives of the Inland Revenue and Office of Woods, and one representative of Government Departments generally.
- (3) All professional work in connection with the valuation, purchase and sale of land and buildings should be undertaken by this department, acting as the agent for the purchasing or selling department.
- (4) The management of Government lands, so far as it consists of estate management in the usual sense of the term, should be entrusted to the Central Lands Department.
- (5) As regards the management work for the Service departments, officers should be seconded from the Central Lands Department to the Service departments, so far as may be necessary.
- (6) The whole of the organisation of the Office of Woods and Forests should be absorbed in the Central Lands Department, the management of the principal agricultural lands being continued on the present basis.
- (7) The division of the management of Crown Lands between two Commissioners should cease.
- (8) Consideration should be given to a policy of gradual sale as favourable opportunities occur of the whole of the Crown agricultural properties (except where, for special reasons of national sentiment or expediency, the retention of a particular estate may be desirable), the proceeds of sale being utilised in the purchase of freehold town investments.
- (9) A review of the net yield of London properties (taking into account reversion value) in relation to the estimated capital value should be undertaken with a view to considering the question of disposals.
- (10) As certain of the duties of the Forestry Commission are not in the nature of ordinary estate management, the Commission should not be incorporated in the Central Lands Department, but valuations, purchases and sales should be carried out by that Department.

- (11) The work of the Board of Trade in connection with foreshores, being intimately connected with certain other duties of the Board, should remain with that Department. The foreshores now under the control of the Commissioners of Woods might, with advantage, be transferred to the Board of Trade, and not to the Central Lands Department.
- (12) The professional staffs of the Ministry of Agriculture and Scottish Board of Agriculture, being to a large extent engaged upon work unsuitable for incorporation in the Central Lands Department, should remain under their present departments; but all valuations, purchases and sales of Government properties on behalf of these departments should be undertaken by the Central Lands Department.
- (13) The Central Lands Department, under the directions of the Treasury, should, in consultation with the Departments concerned, investigate all Government holdings of property with a view to disposing of properties which it may be no longer necessary to retain for Government purposes, or which can with economy be replaced by alternative accommodation equally suitable for the purpose in view.

32. The Committee in conclusion desire to record their appreciation of the value of the services rendered by Mr. G. Ismay in the difficult task allotted to him.

We have the honour to be,

My Lords,

Your obedient servants,

HOWARD FRANK (Chairman).

F. E. G. PONSONBY.

EDWARD G. STRUTT.

JOHN STIRLING-MAXWELL.

N. F. WARREN FISHER.

JOHN H. OAKLEY.

G. ISMAY

(Secretary).

11th May, 1922.

APPENDICES.

1.

LIST OF WITNESSES EXAMINED BY THE COMMITTEE

Sir G. L. Barstow, K.C.B., Treasury.
 Mr. E. H. Coles, C.B. } Lands Directorate (for War Office and Dis-
 Colonel H. F. Cobb, C.B.E. } posal and Liquidation Commission).
 Sir Lionel Earle, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., C.M.G., Office of Works.
 Mr. Morton Evans, Office of Woods and Forests.
 Mr. C. L. Fielder, M.B.E., Admiralty.
 Sir F. L. C. Floud, K.C.B., Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.
 Sir R. V. N. Hopkins, K.C.B., Inland Revenue.
 Sir A. W. Lawrence, Bart., Treasury Solicitor's Department.
 Major-General Lord Lovat, K.T., K.C.M.G., } Forestry Commission.
 K.C.V.O., C.B., D.S.O., }
 Mr. R. L. Robinson, O.B.E., }
 Sir G. E. P. Murray, K.C.B., Post Office.
 Major-General Sir A. M. Stuart, K.C.M.G., C.B., } Air Ministry.
 Lieut.-Colonel A. H. J. Thompson, O.B.E., }
 Mr. C. Gerald Eve, on behalf of the Surveyors' Institution.
 Sir William Joynson-Hicks, Bart, M.P., on behalf of certain Crown
 Tenants.
 Sir Richard Redmayne, K.C.B., on behalf of the Institution of Pro-
 fessional Civil Servants.
 Mr. Harry M. Jonas, C.B.E., of Messrs. J. Carter Jonas & Sons, Crown
 Receivers under H.M. Office of Woods and Forests.

2.

WAR OFFICE.

The area of the land held permanently by the War Department, including land held on lease for terms over 21 years, but excluding foreign stations, is 219,480 acres, consisting principally of the sites of barracks and camps, fortifications, military training areas and rifle ranges. The Department is also in possession of areas totalling 28,527 acres, which were taken for war emergency purposes and have not yet been relinquished.

Many of these properties are by the nature of their user incapable of producing any revenue, but wherever practicable land or buildings which are temporarily surplus to military requirements are let to civilian or other tenants. At the beginning of 1921 the total area of War Department lands so let was 134,382 acres, of which 104,733 acres were subject to military user. The rents derived from these lettings amounted to £69,128, against a cost of maintenance of £23,889. In all these lettings the War Department expressly reserves the right of summarily dispossessing the tenant and resuming possession of the property, but in the event of such action being taken, compensation usually becomes payable to the tenant in accordance with conditions provided in the agreement. In the case of grazing rights, which form a large proportion of the lettings under the War Department, the Department reserves, in addition to the right of summary resumption of possession, the right of military user (including facilities to troops to use the land for recreation) without payment of compensation. In these circumstances it is not generally possible to obtain full commercial rents for War Department lettings.

It is stated by the War Department that the total area let (134,382 acres) is substantially less than the normal peace figure owing to the considerable areas of land resumed from tenants during the war and not yet released from military occupation.

The procedure with regard to purchases of land by the War Department is briefly as follows:—

In August of each year the local military Commands at home and abroad submit a summary of recommendations for the purchase of land and buildings to be considered in connection with the estimates for the following year. Each proposal is reviewed at headquarters and after consultation amongst the various branches of the War Office concerned, the services proposed to be included in the Estimates are, where necessary, submitted to the Treasury for approval. Negotiations for the purchases sanctioned are taken up by the Chief Valuer and Compensation Officer of the Lands Directorate who reports the settlement made to the administrative section of the Directorate, by whom all further action is taken. Urgent recommendations received from time to time from the Commands undergo a similar process of examination.

Similarly the local Military Commands furnish annually a report upon lands and buildings no longer required for military purposes. Before taking action upon these the War Department refers in most instances to the Admiralty. If there is no military or naval objection the Disposal and Liquidation Commission (who are responsible for the disposal of surplus properties acquired *during* the war) are notified that the property is no longer required and steps are taken to effect a sale. The disposal of surplus properties acquired before the war is a matter for the War Department, but the work is in either event carried out by the officers of the Lands Directorate who act for the Commission and the War Department respectively.

From time to time the question of disposing of properties in the occupation of the War Department, the retention of which may no longer be essential for military purposes, has been considered by Committees set up for this purpose, the last such Committee having sat in 1912.

The routine work with regard to War Department lettings is decentralised as much as possible and dealt with by technical officers attached to the Commands, but all cases of doubt or difficulty are referred to the Lands Directorate for instructions. Tenants are usually obtained by inviting open competition among present competent tenants and neighbouring owners or occupiers, and in suitable cases the letting is also publicly advertised. This work is generally carried out in the Commands without reference to the War Office, except in the case of first lettings, long-term lettings, rentals exceeding £100 per annum, and certain minor cases.

The Land Agents in the Commands also carry out a review of year to year tenancies which have been allowed to run for a period of seven years, and consider the question of obtaining an increased rent or otherwise altering the conditions of tenancy.

As regards hirings for War Department purposes, all proposals originate with the military either at the War Office or in the Commands. Where the rent does not exceed £100 per annum the hiring may be settled in the Command without prior reference to the War Office. In other cases the Lands Directorate is responsible for all action, including submission to the Treasury when this is necessary.

The hiring of buildings (for periods not exceeding three years) to supplement barrack accommodation is a matter for the Royal Army Service Corps, but the Command Land Agents are available to give technical advice if desired.

3.

AIR MINISTRY.

The Air Ministry holds about 50 permanent stations covering an area of approximately 20,000 acres (of which leased properties account for about 1,600 acres), in addition to a large number of temporary stations covering approximately 14,000 acres, which are now in process of gradual surrender to the Disposal and Liquidation Commission for disposal.

The management and control of Air Ministry properties is with few exceptions undertaken by the Lands Directorate, in which a special

section at Headquarters is devoted to Air Ministry work. The detail work as regards management is allocated to the Lands Officers in the War Department Commands, with the exception of certain stations transferred to the Air Ministry from the Admiralty, upon which the Valuation Office of the Inland Revenue is consulted.

The cost of the Air Ministry work performed by the Lands Directorate was in 1921 approximately as follows:—

Headquarters Staff:—	£
On War Office Establishment	1,932
On Air Ministry	3,717
Staff in the Commands:	
Contribution by Air Ministry to War Office in respect of services of Land Agents and Staff ...	3,000
Total cost	<u>£13,649</u>

This figure does not, however, represent the cost of management of the 20,000 acres of permanent stations shown above. The great bulk of the work was concerned with temporary holdings, of which 32,000 acres have actually been surrendered, and 14,000 acres are still the subject of negotiations as regards reconditioning. In addition there are many claims in connection with forced landings to be dealt with and a considerable amount of work to be transacted in respect of the properties already handed over to the Disposal Board.

All available land at the various stations is let off to grazing tenants; the receipts are, however, liable to considerable fluctuation, as the rents obtainable are entirely dependent upon the facilities for grazing which are permitted by flying operations.

4.

DISPOSAL AND LIQUIDATION COMMISSION.

The Disposal and Liquidation Commission is a temporary Department entrusted with the fulfilment of a definite function within a limited time.

That function is the realisation of surplus properties and stores acquired during the War and the Liquidation of War commitments.

The Commission does not, therefore, purchase lands for permanent retention, but only with a view to the better realisation of surplus war assets or to minimising liabilities for compensation for damage done to lands or buildings. It is only in this relation that the Commission is concerned with the administration, purchase and sale of lands and buildings. All purchasing, selling, leasing and renting of real property is negotiated and completed by the Lands Directorate, working in close co-operation with the Disposal Board, and the Directorate has up to date realised approximately £12,000,000 for the Exchequer by the sale of surplus lands and buildings, exclusive of hutted camps and temporary structures which can only be sold for removal.

Generally the properties held by the Commission are either now available for disposal or will become so available when no longer required for the storage of surplus stores still awaiting disposal. In certain cases properties belonging to other Departments are temporarily held for storage purposes only, and will revert to their original ownership as soon as cleared. As regards the few properties which are still temporarily occupied by other Government Departments, but will eventually become available for sale, the general policy of the Commission is to acquire the sites with a view to ultimate sale.

The total acreage of the properties at present held by the Commission approximates 24,000 acres, of which about 11,600 acres are Government freehold.

LANDS DIRECTORATE.

As will be seen from the above summaries of the properties of the War Office, Disposal and Liquidation Commission and Air Ministry, the great bulk of the work in connection with the acquisition, administration and disposal of properties for these departments is carried out by the Lands Directorate, together with a staff of Land Agents and Valuers attached to the War Department Commands.

While the Lands Directorate is concerned with almost the whole of the sale, valuation and purchase of land for the above departments, a large part of its work results from the functions which it exercises in dealing with all compensation cases arising out of military occupation during the war.

Prior to January, 1919, approximately 100,000 compensation cases were settled by the Directorate; and between January, 1919, and January, 1922, a further 33,700 cases were dealt with. Approximately 3,097 cases remain for settlement of which 2,299 are for the War Department, 550 for the Air Ministry, and 248 for the Disposal and Liquidation Commission.

Though the number of cases still outstanding is small in comparison with those disposed of, allowance must be made for the fact that the later cases tend to involve questions of great complexity and generally to include the largest claims financially.

At the present time the Lands Directorate is dealing with approximately 311,700 acres in the United Kingdom. Though the bulk of the work performed by the Directorate is on behalf of the War Office, Air Ministry and Disposal Commission, the organisation and special experience of the Directorate has been extensively utilised from time to time by many other Departments.

The present staff of the Lands Directorate at Headquarters is as follows:—

Permanent Staff.

- 1 Comptroller of Lands and Deputy Director General of Lands.
- 1 Land Agent (a permanent appointment, at present merged in that of Chief Valuer and Compensation Officer which is temporary).
- 5 Staff, Minor Staff and Second Division Clerks.
- 6 Draughtsmen, 2nd Class.
- 3 Clerical Officers.

Temporary Staff.

- 1 Director General of Lands (unpaid).
- 1 Chief Valuer and Compensation Officer.
- 4 Deputy Chief Valuers (2 part-time only).
- 2 Superintending Valuers.
- 2 Supervising Valuers.
- 8 Valuers.
- 7 Assistant Valuers.
- 1 Roads Officer.
- 1 Assistant Roads Officer.
- 7 Legal Assistants (3 part-time only).
- 6 Technical Assistants.
- 4 Unestablished Draughtsmen.
- 35 Clerical Staff and Typists.

The present annual cost of this staff is approximately £34,000.

The staff of the War Department employed in the seven Commands (excluding Ireland), is at present:—

- 7 Command Land Agents.
- 12 Supervising Land Agents and Valuers.
- 28 Land Agents and Valuers.
- 6 Assistant Land Agents and Valuers.
- 2 Legal Advisers.

costing approximately £30,000 per annum irrespective of clerical staff. In addition the Royal Engineer Staffs in Commands give part of their time to land duties but no fair estimate can be given of the value of their services.

It is anticipated that it will almost immediately be possible to reduce the staff in the Commands (other than Ireland) to 7 Command Land Agents and 43 other grades.

The growth of the staff in the Lands Directorate and Commands is illustrated by the following figures of cost:—

	Cost in 1914.	Cost in 1920.
Civil Administrative Staff in War Office (including Land Agent)	4,248	44,652
Command Land Agents and other grades in Commands	2,652	60,068
Subordinate staff in Commands	500	32,075
	<hr/> 7,400	<hr/> 136,795

The evidence before the Committee states that practically the whole of this increase of staff is due to the compensation work and other administrative work in connection with requisitioned lands and buildings, which is being carried out for the War Office, Air Ministry and Disposal and Liquidation Commission, etc., and that so soon as this work is concluded it will be possible to revert practically to the pre-war staff of one Land Agent in each Command together with a small headquarters staff. No reliable estimate can be given of the present apportionment of cost as between permanent and temporary work, as the staff is kept absolutely fluid and work is distributed amongst the personnel as occasion requires.

6.

ADMIRALTY.

The properties held by the Admiralty are of a very varied nature, including dockyards, Naval depôts and stores, coastguard stations, barracks and training grounds, hospitals, official residences and office accommodation. The total area of land held permanently amounts to about 17,470 acres freehold in Great Britain and Ireland, and about 31,350 acres freehold situated outside the British Isles. Negotiations for the disposal of a large property held abroad are now in progress, and if this and other smaller contemplated transfers are effected, the acreage of properties held abroad will be reduced to about 8,000 acres. About 2,200 acres of land are held on lease or other tenures, of which 1,665 acres are situated in Great Britain and Ireland.

The income derived from properties in the British Isles amounts approximately to £32,700, derived chiefly from rents of residences and sheds and portions of depôts let to shipbreakers, etc.

The practice adopted until some 10 years ago by the Admiralty in connection with purchases and sales, and all the more important lettings and rentings of properties, was to employ a local firm of valuers, or in large transactions a leading London firm. Just prior to the war the services of the Valuation Office of the Inland Revenue were utilised in certain cases, and on the outbreak of war arrangements were made under which that Office undertook the greater part of the outdoor lands work of the Admiralty in Great Britain, working in collaboration with the Local Superintending Engineers of the Admiralty. In normal times purchases of land by the Admiralty are very small.

The Lands Branch within the Admiralty is responsible for the general administrative control and management of all properties in Admiralty ownership or occupation, including about 600 Coastguard Stations in the Home Commands. This involves all questions relating to the acquisition or disposal of real estate by purchase, lease, feu, or on short term tenure; also all incidental matters relating to such properties, including compensation to dispossessed tenants, licences in respect of easements for light

and air, wayleaves for drains, telephones, etc., granted to or by the Admiralty; questions concerning rights-of-way, apportionment and redemption of tithes and land tax, and offers made to the Admiralty for the selling or letting of property. The Lands Branch, amongst its many duties, conducts or supervises all negotiations with Government Departments, Local Authorities, etc., concerning drainage, water supply, railway and other schemes affecting Admiralty interests; questions of housing accommodation for Admiralty employees; and questions arising on Parliamentary Bills where Admiralty interests are concerned and where technical considerations are involved. In addition the Admiralty have extensive conservancy powers which involve the consideration and granting of licences in respect of works on foreshores, etc.

The staff of the Branch is as follows:—

Permanent Staff.

- 1 Chief Surveyor of Lands.
- 1 Civil Engineer.
- 3 Surveyors of Lands.
- 1 Assistant Civil Engineer.
- 4 Accountant Clerks.
- 1 Engineering Assistant.
- 3 Draughtsmen.
- 3 Clerks, etc.

Temporary Staff.

- 3 Accountant Clerks.
- 4 Draughtsmen or women.
- 5 Clerks, Typists, etc.

Stationed at Outposts.

- 2 Assistant Civil Engineers.
- 1 Assistant Surveyor.
- 1 Engineering Assistant.

7.

H.M. OFFICE OF WORKS.

The Office of Works is responsible, with few exceptions, for the provision and maintenance of accommodation of all sorts required by Civil Departments. The properties administered, excluding Royal Palaces, Royal Parks and Gardens, Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, Ancient Monuments, Historic Buildings not in occupation, Public Statues and Brompton Cemetery, comprise approximately 5,300 buildings, which may be grouped as follows:—

Group.	Number of Buildings.		Cost of Maintenance (Structural and Occupational).	Rental.
	Freehold or Building Leases.	Hired.		
			£	£
1. State Buildings and Institutions...	177	467	375,024	54,522
2. Temporary Institutions arising from the War.	71	245	229,231	93,005
3. Buildings for the accommodation of administrative staff, &c.	264	2,782	652,946	840,123
4. Post and Telegraph Buildings ...	721	546	284,051	151,635
	1,233	4,040	1,541,252	1,139,285

The Department also administers 24 Housing Estates, taken over from the Ministry of Munitions and other Departments, comprising nearly 10,000 houses and hostels and covering an area of 766 acres. The total income at present derived from these properties is £275,300, against outgoings of £150,700.

While it is impossible to give exact returns of the cost of staff engaged upon the various duties of the Department in connection with the properties held, the following estimates have been made by the Office of Works:—

Staff employed upon inspection, hiring, purchase, allocation, sub-letting and sale.

					Cost including War Bonus. £
1	Director of Lands and Accommodation	...	...	...	1,400
35	Inspectors and Property Agents	...	...	...	19,070
13	District Surveyors	...	...	...	5,650
45	Temporary Technical Assistants	...	...	...	14,460
34	Clerical Officers	...	...	...	8,100
<hr/>					
128					£48,680
<hr/>					

The Office of Works staff is organised in nine district offices in England and Wales, in addition to headquarters in London. In London the Directorate of Lands is divided into two sections—the Inspection and Allocation Branch and the Hire and Purchase Branch—but in the provinces both branches are merged.

The division of the technical staff shown above is as follows:—

London:

Inspection and Allocation Branch	...	...	...	...	31
Hire and Purchase Branch	...	...	...	...	22

Provinces and Scotland:

District Surveyors	...	...	...	...	13
Other Staff	...	...	...	...	13

General:

Compensation Work	...	...	...	...	4
Housing and Estate management	...	...	...	...	4
Draughtsmen	...	...	...	...	6

93

The duties of the above officers include the preliminary inquiries into the necessity for acquiring new premises to meet the needs of departments and the general allocation of accommodation, as well as actual negotiations for buildings and sites.

The functions of the Office of Works in regard to providing accommodation vary to some extent according to the purpose for which accommodation is required. In the case of a building of a specialised type such as Postal Buildings, Employment Exchanges and Factories, the requirements are laid down by the requisitioning department and the Office of Works has only a limited power of criticising them. The Office of Works is therefore concerned merely with the provision of the most suitable building in as convenient a locality as possible, and in the most economical manner.

The Office of Works in such cases works in the closest relation with the officers of the requisitioning department in order to ensure that a site or building will be economical for the purposes for which it is required,

and after that department has agreed to a selected site the negotiations for the acquisition of the site or building are conducted by the Director of Lands. Valuations are generally obtained from the Inland Revenue Valuation Office.

As regards the provision of office accommodation for the administrative, technical and clerical staffs of all Government departments the functions of the Office of Works are much wider. The first consideration is to secure that, as a whole, Government staffs are housed in the most economical manner consistent with the efficient performance of their duties. An application for office accommodation cannot therefore be considered in isolation, but must be related not only to concurrent applications, but to any possibilities of utilising existing accommodation, which may be made available as a result of a rearrangement of staffs in one or more departments, or which may fall vacant through reduction of staffs in other departments. The notification by a department of additions to or reductions in its staffs becomes therefore the occasion for a general investigation with a view to improving the whole position.

If it is decided that new accommodation is essential, the search is to some extent directed by the departmental records in which previous propositions in the same district are kept fully up to date. The Director of Lands is responsible for the work, but his officers work in the closest touch with the officers of the Director of Works, and no property is suggested until it has been examined not only as to suitability for a department's requirements, but also from the point of view of the cost of all alterations and adaptations necessary, and the cost of maintenance.

After a proposition put forward by the Director of Lands has been considered by the Secretariat of the Office of Works the approval of the Treasury is sought where necessary, and the final negotiations for the acquisition of the property are undertaken by the Director of Lands.

In the case of property becoming redundant the Office of Works consults any department which might be likely to need such property for other Government purposes, and certain Corporations and Associations are also occasionally given the opportunity of making an offer. If the property is not thus disposed of, the normal procedure is for the Director of Lands to dispose of it either by private negotiation or public auction as may be considered most suitable. A valuation of the property is generally sought from the Inland Revenue Valuation Office to confirm or otherwise strengthen the information in the Office of Works, but the actual negotiations are undertaken by the Director of Lands.

8.

OFFICE OF WOODS AND FORESTS.

1. The properties in the charge of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests consist for the most part of the ancient landed possessions of the Crown, the revenues of which were surrendered to the public by George III in 1760 for the term of his life in return for the grant by Parliament of a Civil List. The Irish and Scottish Land Revenues were similarly surrendered in 1793 and 1820 respectively. The Hereditary Revenues have ever since been surrendered for life by successive Sovereigns in return for the grant of a Civil List.

2. The present system of management by Commissioners possessing statutory powers of sale and leasing was initiated in 1810, following upon the report of a Commission of Enquiry into the state and condition of the Woods, Forests and Land Revenues of the Crown. In 1832 the Offices of Woods and Works were amalgamated under three Commissioners, but the combination was not found satisfactory, as it led to large and undue charges being placed on the Land Revenues of the Crown for the purpose of public works. In 1851, following an enquiry by a Select Committee of the House of Commons, the Offices were again separated by Act of Parliament.

Upon this separation the number of Commissioners of Woods was reduced from three to two, each to be appointed during pleasure by Royal Warrant and to be ineligible for a seat in Parliament. Power was given to the Treasury to assign separate duties to each Commissioner, who was made responsible only for his own acts. By the Crown Lands Act of 1906 the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries for the time being was constituted an additional Commissioner of Woods without remuneration and without being rendered ineligible for a seat in Parliament.

Since 1912 there has been only one paid Commissioner, together with the Minister of Agriculture *ex officio*. The duties assigned by the Treasury to the Minister of Agriculture are the charge of the principal Woods, Forests (except Windsor) and Agricultural Estates in England, Wales and Scotland. The permanent Commissioner is charged with the care of Windsor and the Land Revenue in England, Wales and Scotland (excepting the parts in charge of the Minister of Agriculture) and the Land Revenues in Ireland and the Isles of Man and Alderney.

Powers of the Commissioners.

3. The Commissioners are to observe all orders of the Treasury that are not inconsistent with the Acts for the time being in force and must obtain Treasury authority for all expenditure. No purchase or sale exceeding £100 in value and no exchange, lease or grant can be made without previous Treasury authority, but general authority may be given to cover a particular class of cases. The Commissioners have, in fact, received authority to purchase, sell or exchange up to a value of £1,000 and to grant leases (except leases reserving a royalty) for not more than 31 years up to an annual value of £100.

The powers of sale and exchange extend to any of the possessions and Land Revenues in the charge of the Commissioners not being part or parcel of any of the Royal Forests, Parks or Chases in England. As regards the Royal Forests, limited powers of sale and exchange are laid down, but these conditions could now be satisfied only in the case of the Forest of Dean. No sale of properties can be effected unless the Commissioners are satisfied that the purchase consideration is sufficient. The Commissioners may purchase any lands in fee simple or any charges or rights over Crown lands, and may acquire copyholds and may take or purchase leaseholds. Leases may be granted by the Commissioners under the Crown Lands Act, 1829, subject to maximum periods laid down by that Act.

Description of Estates.

4. The Estates of the Crown on the 31st March, 1921, extended to about 369,900 acres, exclusive of copyholds held by the Crown, foreshores, and areas in which the Crown owns the minerals but not the surface. Of this total area about 164,700 acres consisted of agricultural or pastoral lands; 126,600 acres of unenclosed wastes, subject to commonable rights of grazing; and about 72,300 acres (partly subject to commonable rights) were under the growth of timber.

The agricultural estates are widely scattered over England, and extend into Scotland and Wales; but with the exception of small estates at Dover and Hastings the house property is practically all in or near London.

The most important mineral areas in work are coal fields in Dean Forest and under the sea off the coasts of Northumberland, Durham, South Wales and the South-East part of Scotland. There are slate and other quarries and some inland metallic mines in Wales and a few inland iron and coal mines in Durham and Yorkshire.

System of Management.

5. The estates generally are managed through local officers and agents who are paid either by salary or percentages out of Revenue, and are usually responsible, not only for the collection of rents within their respective districts, but for furnishing valuations and negotiating lettings, sales, purchases, &c., under the directions of the Commissioners.

The following notes show briefly particulars of the principal properties in charge of the permanent Commissioner:

(a) *London Property.*—This property covers an area of approximately 370 acres, and is under the direct management of the Office of Woods, who are advised professionally by an Architect and Surveyor (who is under his agreement permitted to continue in private practice), and by one whole-time technical officer on the permanent staff of the office. The collection of the bulk of the rents of London properties is undertaken by the Receiver-General, a Civil Servant on the permanent staff of the Office of Woods, who also collects submarine Mine Rents and Royalties in England, and certain other items excluded from the local receiverships.

The Cumberland Market Estate, consisting for the greater part of tenement property coming into the possession of the Crown in a more or less dilapidated condition upon the expiration of building leases, is being put into repair as possession is obtained and let directly to the occupiers under the supervision of a local receiver, remunerated by a percentage upon the rents collected.

The revenue derived from the London properties is increasing rapidly, mainly owing to the falling-in of the original long-term building leases of the Regent Street and Regent's Park properties, and rose from £378,299 in 1911 to £426,188 in 1915, to £566,964 in 1919 and to £742,017 in 1921.

The payments chargeable against income have not increased to any great extent, if allowance is made for the increase due to high rates and to the postponement of repairs during the war period.

(b) *Windsor Parks and Woods.*—The only portion of the Home Park in the charge of the Commissioners of Woods consists of about 70 acres open to the public, but they are concerned with the whole area as regards timber and the protection of the Park against the river. In the Great Park the soil, timber and buildings are in the charge of the Commissioners of Woods, subject to certain rights retained by the Crown. The Great Park and the woods at Swinley, Ascot, etc., including about 2,800 acres of the latter which are let for various purposes, contain an area upwards of 14,000 acres. The parts not let consist either of land under the growth of timber, or mixed heath and woodland or pasture in the park.

There are numerous residences, cottages and buildings in the Park maintained by the Office of Woods, which also owns a private waterworks, from which a substantial revenue is derived. The total income for 1921, including £16,467 from sales of timber, was £25,821, against which the outgoings were £65,499, of which £36,569 was due to general repairs and maintenance.

The Windsor Parks and Woods are managed directly from the Office of Woods.

(c) *Agricultural, residential and building estates (excluding London other than Eltham and Hampton).* These consist of about 8,730 acres appropriated to agricultural purposes situate near to London and other towns and more or less suitable for building, a considerable portion at present being used for dairy and market garden purposes, small holdings and allotments. There are also about 2,080 houses, of which the majority are situate at Windsor, Eltham, Dover, Richmond and Hastings.

The Receivership for these properties is held by Messrs. Cluttons, who undertake under the Commissioners the valuation, letting and collecting of rents of farms, houses, etc., and managing various plantations, and are remunerated by a commission on the amount collected, which covers all expenses, including offices, clerical staff, travelling and hotel expenses, stationery, etc.

Fees on a scale sanctioned by the Treasury are paid for valuations of timber, purchases and sales, building leases, assessment of fines and dilapidations, working farms in hand, and other special work executed by the Receivers.

The total collection by Messrs. Cluttons amounted in 1921 to £45,406, of which the main items were agricultural lands, £15,203; houses let at rack rents, £5,246; and houses let at ground rents, £19,857.

The total outgoings were £19,356, of which the cost of collection and surveys amounted to £2,106, and repairs and maintenance to £3,399.

(d) Certain *Foreshore and fee farm rents* are collected by Messrs. Smith, Gore and Company, Crown Receivers for the Northern District since 1906, who also receive a commission (which covers all expenses) on their receipts.

The collection for the year to 31st March, 1921, was:—								£
Lands and foreshores (including wharfage licences)	...							2,422
Fee farm rents	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	549
Mines	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3,141
								<hr/>
								6,112
								<hr/>

6. The property assigned to the management of the Minister of Agriculture as a Commissioner of Woods consists of 119,000 acres of agricultural land in Great Britain, and the Forests and Woodlands, in addition to an area of about 2,551 acres of unenclosed commonable waste within certain manors, and to certain foreshores and other properties adjacent to agricultural estates.

Of the above agricultural lands 77,554 acres are in the Receivership of Messrs. Carter Jonas and Sons who were appointed in 1907 and are remunerated by a commission on all rents collected by them and on the proceeds of all produce sold (except sales by auction). The total collection is approximately £96,250, and the average cost of repairs on gross rents is under 7 per cent.

7. The Properties in Wales, with the exception of the agricultural lands in Messrs. Carter Jonas and Sons' Receivership are under the local management of the Crown Receiver for Wales, a whole-time officer paid mainly by a fixed salary but partly by commission. The Crown Receiver has the assistance of various part-time local officers, including two local collectors of Rents of Assize, various Stewards, Deputy Stewards and Bailiffs of Manors and three local Mine Agents. One of the four districts into which Wales is divided for mining purposes is now under the management of the Inland Revenue Valuation Office.

8. In Scotland the revenue is collected by a Crown Receiver in Edinburgh, assisted by an office staff, with the exception of revenue derived from the Caithness Estates and Orkney. These latter are collected by local Receivers giving only part of their time to the work and remunerated in one case by commission and in the other by a fixed salary.

9. The revenue in Ireland consists chiefly of quit and other unimprovable rents of fixed amount issuing out of private lands. The rents generally are collected by officers of the Customs and Excise on a commission basis, and in the case of the Curragh Estates by the Board of Works, Ireland, under the general supervision of a branch of the Office of Woods in Dublin. This office also looks after the protection generally of the rights of the Crown, a duty which has been made heavy by the intricate questions arising in connection with Irish Land Purchase.

10. There are also local Receivers in the Isles of Man and Alderney charged with the collection of revenue in those Islands.

11. The staff engaged in connection with the administration of the Crown Estates falls into two classes—those paid from moneys voted by Parliament and those paid from Land Revenues.

The staff paid from the Vote for the Office of Woods is mainly administrative and clerical, but includes the following technical officers:—

- 1 Assistant Architect and Surveyor
- 1 Surveyor's Assistant (temporary)
- 2 Draughtsmen (1 temporary).

The total provision for salaries, etc., for 1922/3 is £34,821.

12. The principal divisions of receiverships, etc. are briefly shown below:—

Principal Agricultural Lands.—Messrs. Carter Jonas & Co.

Rentals of house property in South of England and certain agricultural lands.—Messrs. Chittons.

Collection in North of England, mainly foreshores, fee-farm rents, and certain mines.—Messrs. Smith, Gore & Co., London.

London property.—Technical assistance is received from an Architect and Surveyor in private practice who makes valuations, negotiates lettings, sales, and purchases, and advises on all important questions arising. He is paid fees on a scale approved by the Treasury. (Additional assistance is given by the Architect on the staff of the Office of Woods.)

Mines management.—A Mining Engineer in private practice is employed as Chief Mineral Inspector. The same gentleman is also Deputy Gaveler of Dean Forest at a separate salary, and has an office and clerical staff provided from Land Revenues.

Properties in Wales.—A whole time Receiver is employed, paid by a fixed salary together with certain commissions and allowances, together with various local Mine Agents, Collectors of Rents of Assize, Stewards of Manors, etc., paid by small fees or commissions.

Properties in Scotland.—The Crown Receiver in Edinburgh, who is paid by salary, with the assistance of a small staff of clerks, manages the whole of the revenue in Scotland, except in Caithness and Orkney where there are separate Receivers.

Properties in Ireland.—These are administered by the Quit Rent Office in Dublin, the cost of which is included in the estimated Vote expenditure shown above (para. 11).

Properties in Isles of Man and Alderney.—These properties are under the local management of resident Crown Receivers.

9.

FORESTRY COMMISSION.

The Forestry Commission was established by the Forestry Act of 1919, and the lands which the Commissioners have acquired under the powers conferred upon them by that Act consist almost entirely of newly-established plantations or land awaiting planting. The area of the lands so acquired in Great Britain is approximately 133,000 acres, of which about 90,000 acres are held on lease or fen. It is the policy of the Commissioners to let any plantable land not immediately required for afforestation purposes, and to dispose of any agricultural land acquired as part of an estate, but not necessary for nursery purposes. The only surplus unplantable land is said to be so high and rocky as to be practically valueless.

In these circumstances the revenue consists for the most part of rents obtainable for unequipped grazing during the transition from farm to forest, together with rents from some farms and from sporting rights, and amounts approximately to £10,000 per annum.

The duties connected with selection, survey, negotiations for acquisition of estates and the management of those portions not at present under forest are all undertaken by the staff of the Commission engaged upon the silvicultural operations. In Scotland, where the land is held in

larger areas than in England and Wales, there were employed in 1921-2 a Land Acquisition Officer, and a works manager responsible for the provision of accommodation for the workmen by the Commission.

10.

POST OFFICE.

The only Post Office buildings taken by the Postmaster-General without the intervention of the Office of Works are the less important leasehold offices (Class II Crown Offices) in small towns. The number of Class II Offices, including Engineering Stores and Garages, is about 3,200.

The value of the whole of the Post Office properties on the 31st March, 1921, as stated in the Commercial Accounts of the Post Office, was £13,906,382, this figure being the prime cost less depreciation. The total outgoings for that year for maintenance, rates, minor works and alterations, furniture, water, light, &c., amounted to £1,671,209, and the total amount of rents paid for the same period was £338,845.

As regards the acquisition of Class I offices, the Office of Works, after being furnished by the Post Office with the details of the requirements and the area within which a site or building is required, conduct the search for suitable sites in close consultation with the District Surveyors of the Post Office, and, after consulting the Inland Revenue Valuation Office regarding the value of sites, report to the Post Office as to price and suitability. The decision as to suitability is taken by the Post Office who obtain Treasury sanction when necessary. Negotiations for purchase are undertaken by the Office of Works, and, if successful, the conveyance is drafted by the Post Office Solicitor.

Proposals for the acquisition of Class II Offices are submitted by the local officers of the Post Office, and are considered at Headquarters with the aid of an Architectural Assistant attached to the Secretary's Office, who also assists the local officers in connection with preparation of plans and negotiations with a prospective lessor. The terms of the lease are settled with the assistance of the Post Office Solicitor.

Occasionally the Post Office acquires premises, which, not being immediately required for Post Office purposes, are available for letting, or a site for future building on which existing premises can similarly be let. In certain cases rents are received from Postmasters residing on official premises. The total amount realised in this way in 1920-21 was £35,052.

Surplus lands or buildings to be disposed of are usually put up for auction, the conditions of sale being drawn up by the Post Office Solicitor in consultation with the Office of Works Architect. If not put up to auction the Office of Works is consulted as to the price to be accepted.

The Post Office do not employ any staff exclusively upon operations connected with the purchase, sale or maintenance of properties. The work is in the main performed by the Buildings and Supplies branch of the Secretariat of the Post Office, which covers the whole field of Post Office accommodation, fittings and stores and deals with general questions of policy on building matters. The branch consists of 29 members (exclusive of officers engaged on Supplies work), and attached to it are an architectural assistant, buildings surveyor, assistant buildings surveyor and four draughtsmen. The total cost of the branch is about £18,000 per annum. A considerable amount of routine work is performed locally by district surveyors and other officers.

The Post Office Solicitor, under whom eight assistants are engaged more or less exclusively in conveyancing and leasing work, deals with all legal questions arising in connection with Post Office property. The cost, including clerical assistance, is £5,791 per annum.

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT.

The properties with which the Ministry of Transport is concerned fall broadly under three heads:—

- (1) Property which forms an essential part of a Transport or Harbour undertaking, *e.g.*, lock-keepers' houses on the Caledonian Canal, or the Harbour Master's house at Ramsgate Harbour.

In this category fall the Inner and Old Harbours at Holyhead, which are let off at an annual rental of £4,000.

- (2) Property which belongs to a Transport or Harbour undertaking but which is not an essential part of the undertaking.

This consists of a number of houses, stores and sites in Ramsgate and Holyhead, and near the Caledonian and Crinan Canals, producing an income of about £4,000 per annum.

The management of the above properties (including purchases and sales) is carried out by the Ministry through its local officers engaged in connection with the working of the undertaking. The cost of this particular work cannot be separated from the general expenses of the undertakings.

- (3) Land acquired on behalf of the Road Fund in connection with the construction of arterial roads, including occasionally surplus land on either side of the road necessarily included in the purchase owing to severance from the main portion of the owner's property.

As regards the acquisition of these lands by the Ministry of Transport, after the scheme has been worked out by the engineers of that department, the actual negotiations for purchase of the necessary land are usually conducted by the District Officers of the Inland Revenue Valuation Office. No surplus lands have as yet been disposed of, except for the transfer in a few cases of a parcel of surplus land as part compensation to an adjacent owner.

INLAND REVENUE VALUATION OFFICE.

The Valuation Office, which forms part of the Inland Revenue organisation, performs a large volume of valuation work for revenue purposes, and acts as professional surveyors and advisers to many Government departments, in connection with purchases, sales and other dealings in property. Initiation and executive responsibility rest, however, with the department for which the Valuation Office is acting.

In addition to the revenue work the principal duties which the office now carries out are:—

- (1) Acting as professional advisers to the Admiralty, and in so far as land acquired from the Admiralty is concerned, to the Air Ministry, wherever real property is concerned and in connection with compensation questions arising out of the war; to the Ministry of Health on the acquisition of land for public purposes, as to rents to be fixed under housing schemes and as to the realisation of surplus land; and to the Ministry of Transport in connection with arterial road schemes.
- (2) Acting as advisers upon State loans granted on the security of land.
- (3) Advising as to Town Planning Schemes and other work in connection with the Housing Acts.
- (4) Advising as to the value of property owned by claimants to Old Age Pensions.
- (5) Acting upon requests from the Treasury upon proposals affecting lands and generally assisting any Government department asking for professional advice.

- (6) Assisting Local Authorities in certain cases when requested to do so by a Government Department.

The Valuation Office also undertakes on behalf of the Office of Woods the management of quarries belonging to the Crown in North Wales, and, on behalf of the Air Ministry, the management of an area of about 1,000 acres situated at Cardington.

The Office is responsible for valuation work generally on behalf of Government Departments, subject to the qualifications that (a) the War Office, the Air Ministry and the Disposal and Liquidation Commission employ their own valuation organisation—the Lands Directorate—and (b) the Office of Works, the Ministry of Agriculture, and to some extent the Board of Education, whilst calling upon the Valuation Office, Inland Revenue, for advice on values, generally proceed themselves to carry out any negotiations which may be requisite for the purchase or sale, or letting of the property concerned.

The Valuation Office is divided into 111 District Offices normally in charge of a first-class valuer and each district office is responsible for a definite area of the country. In England and Wales the District Offices are co-ordinated and controlled through 13 Divisional Offices in charge of Superintending Valuers, who are in turn responsible to the Chief Valuer. In Scotland the District Valuers are responsible direct to the Chief Valuer in Edinburgh.

The present staff of the Department is shown in the following table:—

ESTABLISHED STAFF.

Grade.

1	Chief Valuer.
1	do. (Scotland).
1	Deputy Chief Valuer.
13	Superintending Valuers.
116	Valuers, 1st Class.
119	„ 2nd „
137	„ 3rd „
<hr/>	
388	Total Established Valuers.
66	Clerks to Valuers.
<hr/>	
454	Total Established Staff.
<hr/>	

Temporary Staff.

10	Temporary Valuers.
368	Temporary Clerks.
57	Shorthand-Typists.
<hr/>	
435	Total Temporary Staff.
<hr/>	

Total Staff.

398	Valuers.
491	Clerical Staff.
<hr/>	
889	
<hr/>	

The total cost on the Inland Revenue Vote for the year 1921/22 was about £500,000, but the provision for 1922/23 has been reduced to £415,695, including travelling and other small expenses.

BOARD OF TRADE—GENERAL.

The Board of Trade are concerned with the provision of sites and buildings for 290 Life Saving and Coast Watching Stations on the coasts of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The sites are frequently part of a Coastguard Station, and therefore Admiralty freehold or leasehold property, or held by the Board of Trade from another Government department. In some cases sites have been purchased, leased or rented by the Board of Trade from private landowners.

The areas involved are very small, varying from 100 to 400 square feet in the case of Watch Huts, with an average of 1,200 square feet in the case of leased or rented properties.

Negotiations for the purchase or renting of these properties are carried out by the Mercantile Marine Department of the Board of Trade, a valuation usually being obtained from the Inland Revenue Valuation Office. Renewals of leases and other negotiations for premises or alterations in tenure of premises average about 20 cases a year.

The Transport Section of the Mercantile Marine Department (formerly Ministry of Shipping) hold a small number of buildings as offices and stores all on short tenancy or determinable on six months' notice.

No staff is exclusively occupied in connection with the administration of any of the above properties.

BOARD OF TRADE—FORESTORES.

The Board of Trade has since 1866 been concerned with the administration of the greater part of the foreshore in Great Britain and Ireland which is Crown Property.

By the Crown Lands Act of that year all parts of the foreshore of the United Kingdom belonging to Her Majesty in right of her Crown were, with the exceptions noted below, transferred from the management of the Commissioners of Woods to that of the Board of Trade.

The following exceptions were made from the transfer:—

- (a) The foreshore of the Rivers Thames and Tees and of the County Palatine of Durham.
- (b) Any portion of foreshore in relation to which any instrument had, before 1st January, 1867, been made or executed by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests.
- (c) Any portion of the foreshore in front of Government property.
- (d) Mines and minerals under the foreshore.

The Board of Trade are responsible for all questions affecting the public right of navigation, and one of the main reasons for the transfer of foreshore effected in 1866 arose from the fact that the Commissioners of Woods were accustomed to make grants of foreshore without reference to the Board of Trade with regard to the interests of navigation. The Board of Trade are also responsible for the disposal of unclaimed wrecks washed ashore, and questions of coast erosion, both of which raise frequent questions intimately connected with the foreshore work.

The view taken by the Board of Trade is that foreshore should be administered in the public interest, and not with the primary object of realising the largest possible revenue from it.

The whole subject was investigated in 1911 by the Royal Commission on Coast Erosion, whose main recommendations upon the subject are as follows:—

“With regard to the changes which appear to be necessary in the law relating to the regulation of the foreshore in the public interest, we would recommend that it is desirable to confine to one Department of the State the administration and control of the surface of the foreshores of the United Kingdom which are the property of the Crown. At present, as we have seen, there are two Departments, *viz.*, the Board of Trade and the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, which have the administration

“and control of such foreshores. This dual control appears to us to be unscientific, unnecessary, and a source of inconvenience to the public, particularly in view of the fact that the two Departments pursue different policies in their dealings with the foreshore.”

“We would accordingly recommend that provision should be made for the administration of the foreshore by one Department in the public interest, and that for this purpose a transfer of such foreshore as remains under the control of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests should be made to the Board of Trade, which has now under its management, in the public interest, the greater part of the foreshores in the United Kingdom which are Crown property.”

“We do not think that it is necessary to interfere with the ownership of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests of mines and minerals under the foreshore; the working of the mines and minerals could, no doubt, be carried out in many cases without prejudice to public rights. It will, however, be necessary to confer power on the Board of Trade to prohibit the removal of such mineral substances on and under the shore when, in their opinion, such prohibition is necessary in the interests of coast protection.”

The work of the Foreshores Branch of the Board of Trade consists briefly of the consideration of all proposals for works on tidal lands and reclamation schemes; the investigation of claims to foreshore; the grant of (a) conveyances, leases and licences of foreshore; and (b) licences for the landing of international submarine cables; the control of the removal of materials; the consideration of bye-laws affecting foreshore; examination of Private Bills, Provisional Orders, and many other questions of an allied nature.

In the grant of leases or conveyances of any importance, a survey and valuation of the foreshore is made at the expense of the applicants. In smaller cases the annual rental or consideration money is fixed by the Foreshores Branch. The draft deeds are prepared in that Branch and settled by the Solicitor to the Board of Trade.

The Staff of the Branch consists of 7 administrative and clerical officers, costing annually about £1,600, under the supervision of a Principal Clerk who devotes only part of his time to this work. No member of the staff is exclusively engaged upon operations in connection with the disposal of foreshore from the standpoint of title.

14.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.

The principal properties held by the Ministry consist of 12 estates purchased or leased for the settlement of ex-Service men and covering an area of about 21,000 acres. The approximate value of these estates, including buildings erected thereon, is £1,035,000, and the annual income produced is about £46,000 against outgoings of £34,000.

The remaining properties in the occupation of the Ministry consist generally of buildings acquired for the conduct of agricultural and fishing experiments and research.

No staff of the Ministry is engaged exclusively upon the purchase, sale, or maintenance of these properties. In the case of the Farm Settlements there are local Directors, a portion of whose time is taken up by the collection of rents from tenants and the superintendence of necessary repairs. The approximate cost of this work is £1,250 per annum.

The principal duty of the Ministry in connection with the acquisition of land arises under the Land Settlement (Facilities) Act, 1919. In accordance with this Act county councils and councils of county boroughs have to obtain the approval of the Ministry to all acquisitions. The normal procedure is for the council to prepare a valuation either through their own land agent or by employing an outside professional man. This valuation is submitted to the Ministry, which obtains a report and valuation from the local District Commissioner of the Ministry (who is in most

cases a qualified valuer) and also from the District Valuer of the Inland Revenue. The Ministry employs at headquarters a Director of Land Acquisition and a Principal Valuer (both of whom are qualified valuers) whose duties include the approval of such proposals received from local authorities for the acquisition of land under the Land Settlement scheme and for agricultural educational purposes, and also negotiating with regard to any land purchased or sold by the Ministry in connection with its own Farm Settlements. The Ministry has many other duties in connection with the approval of the sale of land, as, for example, under the Universities and College Estates Acts and the Glebe Lands Acts, etc.

The professional staff of the Ministry engaged upon the above work, which, it should be noted, is not, in the main, work connected with *Government* lands, is now in process of reorganisation. When this reorganisation is effected it is anticipated that the staff will be:—

- 4 Commissioners, Valuers, etc., at Headquarters.
- 12 Commissioners (6 permanent, 6 temporary) in charge of the 10 local districts into which England is divided for Land Settlement purposes.
- 11 Assistant Commissioners (all temporary).
- 1 Deputy Commissioner.
- 2 Assistants to Headquarters Commissioners.

The cost of this staff is estimated to be £22,100 per annum.

The duties of the District Commissioners are briefly as follows:—

- (1) To value and report fully upon all land which a county council or county borough propose to acquire, giving details of capital and rental value, suitability or otherwise for Small Holdings purposes and any information necessary to enable the Ministry to approve or disapprove of the acquisition.
- (2) To approve or prepare a complete scheme of development and equipment of the land as Small Holdings, and to fix or agree rents.
- (3) To attend important meetings of county councils and county boroughs and to advise and assist them in the execution of their duties. To watch in every way the expenditure of moneys with a view to ensuring that while the duties cast upon the county councils and the Ministry are discharged efficiently, the utmost possible economy is ensured.
- (4) Generally to act as the local representatives of the Ministry in all matters connected with the work of the Land Department and to advise the Ministry on all technical and professional land matters arising in their various areas.

15.

SCOTTISH BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

The chief properties held by the Scottish Board of Agriculture have been acquired for the purposes of Land Settlement under the Small Holding Colonies Acts, 1916 and 1918, and the Land Settlement (Scotland) Acts, 1919 and 1921. While in England land Settlement is administered mainly by the county councils under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, in Scotland the duties fall directly upon the Scottish Board of Agriculture. The area of the properties acquired amounts to about 300,000 acres (together with 84,000 acres transferred from the Congested Districts Board for Scotland), of which about 294,000 acres were purchased outright by capital payment or rent charge, 2,230 acres are held on lease and 3,446 acres on feu. In addition the Board have at present in hand under the Small Landholders (Scotland) Acts, 1886-1919, 70 schemes involving an area of over 100,000 acres in private ownership.

All purchases and sales of land and buildings and duties connected with the management of properties are undertaken by the Board through their administrative staff, on the advice of the technical staff.

The technical outdoor staff of the Land Division for 1922-23 is as follows:—

- 1 Chief Factor.
- 6 Senior Sub-Commissioners (1 temporary).
- 12 Sub-Commissioners (7 temporary).
- 15 Assistant Sub-Commissioners (13 temporary).
- 1 Chief Surveyor.
- 1 Assistant Chief Surveyor.
- 6 District Surveyors (4 temporary).
- 38 Surveyors and Assistant Surveyors (26 temporary).
- 37 Other Grades (temporary).

The Land Division Staff is at present organised on the basis of six geographical districts, nominally three Highland and three Lowland, each worked by a section under the general charge of a Senior Sub-Commissioner and a Staff Clerk, stationed in Edinburgh, with Sub-Commissioners and Assistant Sub-Commissioners in their respective districts.

The duties of the Senior Sub-Commissioners and Sub-Commissioners include, subject to the control of the Board:—

- (a) interviewing and selecting applicants for holdings;
- (b) inspection and selection of land suitable for settlement by purchase or otherwise, and reporting thereon;
- (c) the preparation of schemes of sub-division and settlement on areas selected or acquired;
- (d) settlement of selected applicants on the schemes approved;
- (e) management of farming operations pending the sub-division of available farms.

Sales of land acquired by the Board for the purposes of the Land Settlement (Scotland) Acts, are regulated by the terms of Section 6 (3) and 6 (5) of the Act of 1919. Sales are otherwise carried out by negotiation and private bargain between the Board and the prospective buyer and are completed by the Board's solicitor.

Estate management as carried out by the Board on the advice of the Sub-Commissioners and Chief Factor falls generally into three phases:—

- (a) The management of subjects held under existing tenancies;
- (b) temporary management as occupying owners of subjects vacated and to be sub-divided;
- (c) the management of estates occupied wholly or largely by landholders.

The Board's estates in the Western Isles are factored by an Assistant Factor resident in Skye, acting under the supervision of the Senior Sub-Commissioner for the District. All other estates are factored by the Board's Chief Factor with the assistance in some of the remoter areas of part-time local agents. The services of the Sub-Commissioners and Surveyor Staffs are utilised.

The management of the estates during phases (a) and (b), which are concurrent on the larger estates, presents special problems consequent on the removal of existing tenants and the settlement of a greater number of small holders. On legal questions the Board are advised by their solicitor and in the settlement of waygoing claims by the Senior Sub-Commissioner concerned.

The management of portions of the estates during the settlement of holders requires special arrangements and during the period of transition the supervision of such portions of estates is carried out by the administrative section through the Sub-Commissioner Staff, and is handed over to the Chief Factor on completion of the settlement.

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